

Aurangzaib Yousufzai – June 2017

Thematic Quranic Translation Series Installment 5
(IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE)

Chapter Al-Feel

Story of Invasion of Makkah by King Abraha –
with a contingent of Elephants

defined in the true light of Quran

PRELUDE

Chapter Al-Feel of Quran just cannot refer to an episode from the past, pre-Mohammadan history of Makkah or Arabia..... as we are invariably misled to believe in our inherited exegeses. It is by all accounts a narrative in purely present continuous tense, in exclamatory terms, assuring the Holy Messenger about the setbacks being suffered by his enemies in their antagonism of his divine mission. The sentences in a quite obvious present tense are presented like this :-

“Do you not witness how....(أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ)”,,,,,,, and,
“Does He not make their follies/plannings go waste....(أَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ كَيْدَهُمْ فِي تَضْلِيلٍ)”!!!

Had it been a description of a past event of history, Quran would never use such a present form of address. To this humble writer’s best knowledge, no learned Quranist scholar has hitherto made the slightest effort to discover this obvious and readily veritable truth. On the contrary, all have followed blindly the same myth of “The People of the Elephants” which they had inherited from an inglorious past. However, every learned translator’s vocabulary and style of presentation may certainly be found slightly different from others. Some have also tried to become somewhat rational by doing away with the old theory of “stone-throwing birds”, and replacing it with Makkans throwing stones from mountain tops. Nevertheless, what does Quran in reality elucidate by this small

Chapter,,,,,,,,, we're going to know, perhaps for the very first time, by the most rational, honest and academic translation that follows hereunder.

Acknowledging Quran's sacred text as a proven masterpiece of Classical Arabic, a style most befitting the Exalted Being of its Narrator, this humble writer has initiated and introduced a project of purely thematic translations of this Book's divergent guiding injunctions. To lay emphasis on only "Themes" serves the purpose of reducing the volume of each and every piece of work to the level of an easy and quick reading, and to throw light on just those misconstrued issues that become a target of ridicule in our day to day life. This type of classified work also saves this writer from a formidable venture of translating the entire Book for which he neither finds the required time nor possesses the relevant degree of competence. On the other hand, in more expanded undertakings, chances of substantial repetitions do exist. Countless number of full translations exists everywhere, whose uncontroversial part of contents may not differ from, but conform to a great extent with, any other new version.

So, this rational translation series takes into account Quran's metaphoric, allegoric, idiomatic and symbolic expressions and strives to purify the gross misrepresentation of its texts by vested interests in the past. Very commonplace and literal meanings of words were employed in the past with the ulterior motives of carrying out a large scale corruption of Quran's ideology. That vicious practice is fully condemned and discarded herewith. A dozen most authentic Arabic lexicons are widely utilized in arriving at those definitions that best suit the context of themes being discussed, keeping fully in view the relative background of every narrative, while adhering strictly with the values and ideals of human conduct that are the essence, and form the basis of Quranic message.

Let us start with the name of our Lord, the Almighty Allah.

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ ﴿١﴾ أَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ كَيْدَهُمْ فِي تَضْلِيلٍ ﴿٢﴾ وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ ﴿٣﴾ تَرْمِيهِمْ بِحِجَارَةٍ مِّن سِجِّيلٍ ﴿٤﴾ فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَّأْكُولٍ ﴿٥﴾

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ ﴿١﴾

“Alam tara kayifa fa’ala Rabbu-ka bi-Ashaab il Feel”(1)

“Do you not witness how your Lord dealt with those ignoble ones possessed of pomp and arrogance (بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ)?”

Fa-Ya-Lam = to be weak-minded, to rebuke, lack of wisdom, give bad counsel, to magnify & aggrandize oneself. Weak and erroneous judgement or opinion, erring in judgement/insight, to magnify oneself and become like an elephant, showed a morose aspect, elephant, (it) increased, to become fat/big like an elephant, Heavy (or dull) and low, ignoble or mean, keeper/master of the elephant.

أَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ كَيْدَهُمْ فِي تَضْلِيلٍ ﴿٢﴾

“a-lam yaj’al kayida-hum fi tadhleel” (2)

“Does He not make all their planning/tricks go lost/waste?”

وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ ﴿٣﴾

“wa arsala ‘alayi-him tayiran ababeel” (3)

“Because He has sent against them groups (أَبَابِيلَ) of eagle-eyed men (طَيْرًا) to knock them out,”

ط ي ر ; = **Tay-Ya-Ra** = flew, hasten to it, outstripped, become foremost, fled, love, become attached, famous, conceive, scatter/disperse, fortune; rush, shoot, knock out, to blow, to make disappear, dispel; predatory birds; birds of prey

Ababil: a flock, a bundle, numerous, herd of camels, etc.

تَرْمِيهِمْ بِحِجَارَةٍ مِّن سِجِّيلٍ ﴿٤﴾

“tarmee-him bi-hijaaratim min sijjeel”(4)

“Who keep striking/showering them with intellectual arguments (حِجَارَةٍ) from a written Scroll (سِجِّيلٍ) ”.

Hijaaratin; Hijr: intellect (Steingass, page 264);

Understanding, intelligence, intellect, mind, or reason (Lane's page 520);
Controlling power, restrictive power (89/5) لَذَى حَجَر , for a rational person, person of discernment, reasonable person, a person with restraint (Brill, page 191);
One gifted with intelligence (89/5)- (Dict. And Glos of Quran by Penrice, page 32);
Understanding, intelligence, reason (89/5) – (M.G.Farid, page 166);

Siin-Jiim-Lam = to pour out, spill (liquid), write a paper or a scroll, decide judicially.

sijil - written scroll, writing-roll, deed, writ, judicial record, scribe.
sijjil - hardened and petrified clay, stones of clay which had been written or decreed for them that they should be punished therewith, scroll of writing, scribe.

فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَّأْكُولٍ ﴿٥﴾

“fa-ja’ala-hum ka-‘asfim maakool” (5)

“Thus, with this kind of confrontations, He caused to turn them into a humble thing like eaten straw”.

AND NOW A RUNNING TRANSLATION:-

“Do you not witness how your Lord dealt with those ignoble ones possessed of pomp and arrogance? Does He not make all their planning/tricks go waste? It is because He sent against them groups of eagle-eyed men to disperse them, who keep striking/showering them with intellectual arguments from a written Scroll. Thus, with this kind of advances, He caused to turn them into a humble thing like eaten straw”.